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ABSTRACT

The College Educational Opportunities Program (CEOP) is a feature of the Black Studies Community Extension Center, located in an inner-city area of Columbus, Ohio, conducted through The Ohio State University (OSU). It provides disadvantaged adults with an opportunity to take fully accredited basic courses in mathematics, English, black studies and UVC (an introductory course on college life). The program provides tuition assistance and individual personalized counseling for people needing assistance in entering other classes on OSU's main campus. It teaches participants the basic skills needed to succeed in college by offering useful courses in a supervised setting. A survey of the 175 adults who participated in the program between the years 1976-1980 developed a profile of typical students. The profile showed that the greatest percentage of adults participating in the programs was between 25 to 34 years-of-age; that nearly eight times as many women as men attended, and that the largest percentage of participants had an income in the $5,000 to $5,999 range. The largest percentage of participants were separated, had three or more dependents, and were either employed or never employed. The survey found that the program was successful in that 75 percent of the students either found a job or moved to a higher level of employment, and approximately 40 percent reported that they went on to take another class at OSU or at another college or university. Recommendations for counseling services, mini-courses, support services, financial aid, curriculum development, and student recruitment were made as a result of the study. (KC)

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ADULT EDUCATION IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY:

A CASE STUDY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO

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CEOP - WHAT IS IT?*

The College Educational Opportunities Program (CEOP) is a feature of the Black Studies Community Extension Center, through The Ohio State University. It provides disadvantaged adults (age 21 or over) with an opportunity to take fully accredited basic courses in Math, English, Black Studies and U.V.C. (an introductory course on college life). The program provides tuition assistance and individual personalized counseling. Those who qualify for the program will receive these benefits without having to go to OSU's main campus. It provides participants the basic skills needed to succeed in college by offering useful courses in a supervised setting.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The College Educational Opportunity Program (CEOP) seeks to expand educational opportunities for disadvantaged citizens by establishing a coordinated program of college level academic work at the Black Studies Community Extension Center, located in Columbus' eastside community. Traditionally, deficiencies in educational background, adverse economic conditions and demanding family responsibilities have served as formidable barriers to the enrollment of disadvantaged adults of the near eastside community at The Ohio State University. This project attempts to reduce barriers to disadvantaged adult enrollment at Ohio State through the establishment of well organized and meaningful tuition assistance programs in a university institution located physically in the near eastside area community. The central idea is to create a vehicle which will facilitate community involvement in The Ohio State University to community residents. The ultimate goal is to use the Community Extension Center to integrate community residents more fully into university life. The Community Extension Center offers a variety of services both academic and non-academic within the community to facilitate the transition to main campus.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY OF TARGET AREA

Since 1940 the minority population of Columbus has increased substantially. Between 1940 and 1980 the percentage of blacks rose from 11.6 percent to 21 percent.(1) However, these gains in numbers have not been reflected in the racial composition of The Ohio State University student body. The Ohio State University has the distinction of being the second largest campus in the United States with an enrollment of over 55,000 students, yet black students comprise only 5.7 percent of the total enrollment.(2) Clearly, black and other racial minorities are underrepresented at The Ohio State University in proportion to their numbers in the Columbus community.

A two year study by the University Commission on Student Attrition and Retention recently reported that only 21 percent of black students at The Ohio State University graduate within five years versus 42 percent of all students, and that black males have only a one in 20 chance of graduating from The Ohio State University.(3) Moreover, a recent editorial in The Ohio State University student newspaper, The Lantern, revealed that the status of minorities at The Ohio State University is even more bleak in some of the professional schools. For example, "...black students in the OSU Medical School dropped from 6 percent in 1977-78, to 2 percent in 1979-80? The enrollment of Hispanic students has increased from zero, in 1977-78, to a whopping .4 percent in 1979-80, while at the same time Asian/Oriental students have increased from 1 percent in 1977-78 to 1.7 percent in 1979-80."(4) If college enrollment continues to decline as indicated in the March 3, 1982 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education,(5) then the presence of black and other disadvantaged students on college campuses will be further reduced. Indeed, The Office of Minority Affairs at The Ohio State University recently reported that although minority students made up about six percent of The University's undergraduate population a few years ago, it has dropped to approximately 4.5 percent.(6) Clearly, the need for the College Educational Opportunity Program to provide disadvantaged adults with financial aid and academic assistance is greater now than ever. The literature on adult education suggests that educational opportunities for blacks are declining. For example, in 1975, 6.9 percent blacks as compared to 12.1 percent whites participated in some form of adult education (see Table 2).(7) Moreover, analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data suggests that differences in black and white adult education participation rates may be correlated with socio-economic differences:

> Blacks have lower levels of education attainment (53 percent of whites and 30 percent of blacks have had at least some college), earned lower incomes (24 percent of whites and 44 percent of blacks have annual incomes under $10,000), are more likely to be unemployed (4 percent for whites, 10 percent for blacks)...(8)

What is known about our target area (population) conforms to what has been identified as significant in the NCES data (see Demographics of Target Area, Appendix II). Our target area comprised the area extending from the innerbelt (I-71) on the West to Alum Creek on the East, and from the Conrail Railroad on the North to Interstate 70 on the South. This area contained 29,261 people in 1977 (see Appendix II). In 1974, blacks comprised approximately 84 percent of this area and white appalachians comprised 16 percent.(9) The estimated median income per household (1978) is approximately $6,000 or a total income of $78.3 million.(10)

The population density averages between 25,000 - 49,999 persons per square mile as compared to a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) average of 613 persons per square mile.(11) Finally, the percentage of all persons 25 years old and over who are high school graduates in the target area ranges between 20.0 to 34.9 percent as compared to SMSA average of 60.7 percent as of 1974.(12) Historically, Black Americans have been afforded lesser educational opportunities than their white counterparts as Table 1 reveals:(13)

TABLE 1. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES BY RACE
(25 years of age and over)

	1960	1970	1980
Overall	41%	52.2%	66.3%
Blacks	20%	34%	50.6%

Source: Columbus Dispatch, Monday, April 19, 1982.

Prepared by: The Ohio State University, Department of Black Studies, Community Extension Center, 640 South Ohio Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43205.

Our estimation of the percent of blacks (age 25 years and over) who have completed high school in the target area is much less than 50% in 1980 as compared to a recent census report of 73.1% for the Columbus Metropolitan area.(14) Clearly, the educational needs of the near eastside area community cannot be overstated.

PARTICIPANTS IN ADULT EDUCATION

A general hypothesis guiding this evaluation is that adult education programs, such as CEOP, better serve (provides more accessibility) disadvantaged students than regular (full-time, day-time) education programs. However, there are not enough studies available for us to make this type of comparative evaluation.(15) Virtually all studies show that adult education programs (i.e. suburban mall course offerings, office tower evening/week-end courses, etc.) predominantly serve privileged members of society.(16) Cross and Zusman conclude that participants in adult education programs "...are disproportionately young, white [see Table 2], well-educated, white-collar workers from the middle and upper classes."(17) The College Education Opportunity Program, contrary to the majority of programs in adult education, provides opportunities to a segment of the population historically not represented in traditional adult education programs (see Appendix II, Survey of Target Area). Since educational opportunity is viewed as one of the most equalizing influences in today's society, our focus will be to profile students participating in CEOP by Age, Sex, Income, Number of Dependents, Marital Status, and Employment Characteristics. The profile is compared (when possible) with data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics on adult participation rates.

TABLE 2. PARTICIPATION RATE IN AE PROGRAMS BY RACE (NCES, 1975)

Years	Blacks	Whites
1969	7.8	10.2
1972	7.4	11.7
1975	6.9	12.1

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 1975

TABLE 3. PARTICIPATION RATE IN AE PROGRAMS BY SEX (NCES, 1975)

Years	Men	Women
1969	11.2	9.0
1972	11.9	10.8
1975	11.7	11.6

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 1975.

METHODOLOGY, EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

The evaluation of CEOP employed an intake questionnaire that allowed us to develop a profile of the students participating in the program. A student profile was developed based on the following standardized information: (1) Age, (2) Sex, (3) Yearly Income, (4) Marital Status, (5) Number of Dependents, and (6) Employment Status.

Age

The composite profile of students participating in CEOP by age conforms to findings generated by the National Center For Education Statistics (NCES). A greater percentage of adults participating in adult education programs were between the ages of 25-34 (see Table 4).

Sex

According to NCES data, men and women participate in adult education programs at about the same rate, although the participation of women in adult education programs has increased more rapidly than men in recent years (see Table 3). In contrast to national data findings, our sample data reveals that women participated in CEOP in percentages nearly eight times that of men between the years 1976 - 1980 (see Table 4).

Income

Analysis of NCES 1975 data reveals that the largest percentage (17.7 percent) of the participants in adult education programs falls in the income category of $25,000 and over as compared to 0.0 percent of the participants in CEOP. The largest percentage of participants in CEOP fell within the $5,000 - 5,999 income category as compared to 7.5 percent of the NCES participants (see Table 4). Furthermore, NCES data reveals that nearly one-half (46.4 percent) of the participants in adult education programs fall in the category of $10,000 and over as compared to 14 percent of the participants in CEOP (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. PARTICIPATION RATE IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM TARGET AREA 1976 - 1980 vs NCES DATA, 1975

Age	Participation Rate (Target Area)	Participation Rate NCES, 1975
17-24	17%	11.5%
25-34	46.5%	20.6%
35-44	24%	15.0%
45-54	3.5%	10.5%
55-64	4.0%	5.8%
65 and older	5.0%	2.3%
Sex		
Male	11%	11.7%
Female	89%	11.6%
Income (Dollars Per Year)		
Under 3,000	22%	4.4
3,000 - 4,999	17%	5.5
5,000 - 5,999	29%	7.5
6,000 - 7,499	14%	9.1
7,500 - 9,999	4%	11.5
10,000 - 14,999	12%	12.9
15,000 - 24,000	2%	15.8
25,000 - and over	--	17.7

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, 1975: Also The Ohio State University, Department of Black Studies, Community Extension Center, 640 South Ohio Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43205.

Marital Status, Number of Dependents and Employment Status

Comparative data from NCES was not available for marital status, number of dependents, and employment status. However, our profile of participants in CEOP revealed that the largest percentage of participants tended to be separated (38 percent), three or more dependents (35 percent) and both employed and never employed (34 percent and 30 percent, respectively) (see Table 5). The high percentage of participants falling in the

TABLE 5. PARTICIPATION RATE IN THE COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, 1976 - 1980

Marital Status	Participation Rate
Married	19%
Single	32%
Separated	38%
Divorced	11%
No. of Dependents	
None	14%
One	24%
Two	27%
Three or more	35%
Employment Status	
Employed	34%
Unemployed	25%
Temporary	11%
Never Employed	30%

Source: The Ohio State University, Department of Black Studies, Community Extension Center, 640 South Ohio Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43205.

"never employed" category were all women who were career housewives or engaged in "domestic work." Consequently, these participants had never been "formally" categorized as working adults. Moreover, based on our retroactive post-evaluation open-ended interview schedule (see Appendix III), female participants in all employment categories (especially "never employed") revealed that their motivation or reason for participating in the adult education program was based on two major responses: (1) recently separated or divorced and (2) need to supplement family income (i.e. increase job marketability). These findings conform to findings generated by analysis of NCES data. According to Cross and Zusman (1977):[18]

> Their reasons for continuing their [black women] education are basically job related and they are much less likely than white women to be taking so-called "luxury" courses in social life and recreation (3 percent to 24 percent), or courses in community issues (5 percent to 11 percent), or personal and family living (9 percent to 29 percent).

Cross and Zusman note that black men, similar to black women cite financial reasons for participating in adult education programs, although their reasons appear to be more "personal" than "family related."[19] These findings conform to our CEOP data findings. Eleven percent of the men cited personal reasons for participating in the program while 89 percent of the women gave non-personal (i.e. family concerns, etc.) reasons for participating in the program.

We were also concerned with drop-out rates and reasons for dropping out of the program. NCES data reveals that black men and women drop-out rates in adult education programs are approximately the same (9 percent and 11 percent, respectively).[20] Contrary to NCES data, our data revealed that black men had a higher drop-out rate in adult education programs than black women (50 percent and 25 percent, respectively). This can probably be accounted for by the small number of black men participating in the program. The reasons black women and black men gave for dropping out of the program tended to conform to NCES data.[21] The same reasons provided by both black males and black females for dropping out of the program were the same reasons

provided for participating in the program. That is, black men cited more "personal" or "individualistic" reasons for dropping-out of the program while black women tended to cite less "personal" or "individualistic" reasons for dropping out of the program (11 percent and 89 percent, respectively). In addition to a counterfinding generated by our data between black females and black males when compared to NCES data, our data reveals a much higher drop-out rate overall. This finding further underscores the hypothesis that socio-economic factors are strongly related to participation rates. Our program was purposely targeted to a designated poverty area of the community (see Appendix II, Survey of Target Area).

An objective of CEOP was to increase the marketability and higher educational opportunities for low-income, disadvantaged adults. A total of 175 adults participated in the program between the years 1976 - 1980. Based on our post evaluation survey, we found that 75% or 131 students reported that they had either found a job or moved to a higher level of employment and approximately 40% or 70 students reported that they went on to take another class at The Ohio State University or another college or university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Counseling Services.

A variety of counseling services would help to attract and retain students.

A. Academic Counseling. The focus of this service is to provide individual assistance in all academic matters, including: course selection; choice of faculty adviser; academic standing; and procedural matters such as...incompletes, drops, adds, and withdrawals.

B. Financial Counseling. The focus of this service is to inform students and potential students of all financial assistance programs available at local colleges and universities. Application forms and technical assistance in filling out applications would be provided.

C. Career Development Counseling. The focus of this service is to help the student explore the career implications of continuing education.

2. Mini-Courses.

Series of short courses designed to improve skill levels. Topics might include:

A. Art of test taking.

B. How to write a term paper.

C. Listening and note-taking.

D. Using the library.

E. Computer anxiety.

3. Support - Services.

Services that help to overcome barriers that prevent disadvantaged adult learners from participating in higher education.

A. Stipend for child care expenses.

B. Flexible scheduling to accommodate work and family responsibilities (i.e. weekend colleges, etc.).

C. Newsletter would serve to disseminate information about the program and serve as a recruitment mechanism. Featured stories of those who successfully complete the program might encourage others to try.

4. Financial Aid.

Financial aid is crucial to ensure an educational experience for disadvantaged students. Partial to full tuition maintenance including processing admissions fees is recommended.

5. Curriculum Development.

To ensure high quality course offerings that "fit" the needs of disadvantaged students, the following is recommended:

A. Periodic review of course offerings.

B. Make course descriptions including course requirement available to students.

C. Textbooks and other supplemental materials made available at site location.

D. Student evaluation of courses.

6. Continuing Research and Development.

To maintain program excellence the following is recommended:

1. Periodic needs assessment of students.
2. Monitoring student progress after participation in CEOP i.e... career advancement, continuation of academic work.
3. Periodic evaluation of program effectiveness and corresponding adjustments in program operations.

7. Recruitment.

Utilize local media to announce program details. Free and paid announcements should be used with an emphasis on public service announcements.

8. Advisory Committee.

A committee of students, residents and program personnel should advise and monitor program goals and objectives.

9. On-Campus Liaison Committee.

The develcpment of an on-campus liaison committee to stimulate broader participation by OSU academic units in the College Educational Opportunity Program.

10. Curriculum Development Committee.

The establishment of a curriculum development to plan the creation of a formal certificate program based upon student matriculation in the College Educational Opportunity Program.

CONCLUSION

The College Educational Opportunity Program has played an important role in the extension of educational benefits to the Columbus Black community. Over the years this program has served as an important vehicle for identifying potential clients for adult educational programs and motivating them to finish high school and go to college. With the assistance of the Office of Continuing Education at OSU, CEOP launched several massive publicity campaigns designed to stimulate interest in the Black community in adult education. These efforts produced rich dividends; in the wake of these campaigns hundreds of black citizens made inquiries regarding the availability to them of educational services to OSU.

As we have seen, many of these individuals went the additional step of formally enrolling in CEOP classes. That they did so is a matter of great significance. Most of the students enrolled in CEOP had been uninvolved in educational programs of any kind for well over a decade. The decision to embark on a new educational career was, for these students, a deeply emotional one. Having been away from school for many years, these students tended to be overwhelmed with the fear of failure. For these individuals CEOP served as a vital point of entry into the educational process. This program had the great advantage of allowing clients to attend classes in the salubrious environment of their own neighborhood; it also shielded them from the competitive pressures associated with classroom instruction and performance on the main campus. CEOP provided opportunities for adult students to take classes with their peers, and to receive instruction tailored to fit their special needs. It is unquestionably true that without this program, most of the individuals enrolled in CEOP classes would not have been motivated to become college students.

CEOP has not only been an important motivating factor in the educational process, it has also helped clients to develop a high degree of self-confidence in their professional, vocational and community roles. CEOP has helped hundreds of individuals improve their skills in basic Math, English, and other fields. Many of these individuals have put their training

to practical use, becoming deeply involved in community activity and assisting other individuals to become more proficient in important areas of learning. In this sense, the actual impact of CEOP extends far beyond the educational benefits received directly by students enrolled in the classes. CEOP has created an interest in higher education by disparate segments of the Black community, and established new channels through which educational benefits can be delivered.

As this report has shown, CEOP has also improved the marketability of program participants. This program has at once given them new salable skills as well as important educational credentials, both of which have loomed large in the ability of these individuals to advance themselves in their careers.

Finally, CEOP has established important cooperative links between OSU and the Black community. It is impossible to attach an appropriate dollar value to the enormous amount of goodwill generated by this program in the Black community. OSU will undoubtedly be reaping the benefits of these sympathetic feelings for many years to come. At the same time, important avenues have been opened for the delivery of educational benefits from OSU to the Black community. The Black Studies Community Extension Center remains as an important vehicle for coordinating the involvement of many departments and programs in on-going black community development. We would encourage a retrospective assessment of the CEOP experience, and a serious consideration of the continuation of this program by OSU officials and officials of the Columbus Foundation. More broadly, we strongly advocate that serious consideration be given to the mounting of a resource team that can begin to launch multidimensional approaches to the myriad problems besetting disadvantaged citizens living in major urban centers.

FOOTNOTES

(1) G. Gilbert, J. Upton, et al. The State of Black Columbus. (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Urban League, 1980), p. 7.

(2) The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 2, 1981, p. 15.

(3) Report of the University Commission on Student Attrition and Retention. (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, November, 1981), p. 50; also, see The Ohio State University Lantern, Friday, May 21, 1981, Editorial.

(4) "Race awareness survey highlights need for greater understanding from 'majority'," The Ohio State University Lantern, Friday, May 21, 1981.

(5) The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 3, 1981, p. 1.

(6) Columbus Dispatch, Thursday, February 11, 1982.

(7) K. Patricia Cross and Ami Zusman, The Need of Nontraditional Learners and The Response of Nontraditional Programs. (Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, June, 1977), p. 8.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Department of Development, City of Columbus, Columbus, Ohio.

(10) U.S. Bureau of the Census and Manpower, Urban Atlas. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974).

(11) Ibid.

(12) Ibid.

(13) "More than half of Americans boast a high school diploma," Citizen Journal, Monday, April 19, 1982.

(14) "Income of area whites far higher than blacks," Citizen Journal, Monday, April 19, 1982.

(15) Medsker, L., Edelstein, S., Kreplin, H., Ruyle, J., and Shea, J. Extending Opportunities for a college degree: Practices, Problems, and Potentials. (Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1975).

(16) K. Patricia Cross and Ami Zusman, op. cit. p. 4.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid., p. 9.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.

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